

**A reading from Hebrews chapter 2 verses 14 through 18. You can find this reading on page 1002 of your pew Bible.**

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

**The Word of the Lord.**

***Thanks be to God.***

**Please join me in praying Psalm 132.**

Leader: The Lord swore to David a sure oath  
from which he will not turn back:

**People: “One of the sons of your body  
I will set on your throne.**

Leader: If your sons keep my covenant  
and my testimonies that I shall teach them,

**People: their sons also forever  
shall sit on your throne.”**

Leader: For the Lord has chosen Zion;  
he has desired it for his dwelling place:

**People: “This is my resting place forever;  
here I will dwell, for I have desired it.**

Leader: I will abundantly bless her provisions;  
I will satisfy her poor with bread.

**People: Her priests I will clothe with salvation,  
and her saints will shout for joy.**

**All: There I will make a horn to sprout for David;  
I have prepared a lamp for my anointed.**

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as  
it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**Leader: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to Matthew.**

***People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel"  
(which means, God with us).

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

**Leader: The Gospel of the Lord**

***People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.***